

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 01237 150656Z
ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL IN CORK EXAMINER APRIL 13, 1978

FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN CORK EXAMINER
APRIL 13, 1978 UNDER HEADING CONGRESS GETS
IMPATIENT.

THE IMPATIENCE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS EXPRESSED
WITH CONGRESS IS UNDERSTANDABLE. WHEN HE INTRODUCED
HIS ENERGY BILL, HE DECLARED THAT IT WOULD BE ONE
OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTS OF HIS TERM OF OFFICE.
HE HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE SPEEDILY IMPLEMENTED.

THE SENATE OBLIGED AND PASSED THE MEASURE QUICKLY.
BUT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS SAT ON IT FOR
A YEAR, MAKING NO PROGRESS WHATSOEVER ON THE
CENTRAL ISSUE OF PRICING OF OIL AND GAS.

PRESIDENT CARTER'S STRATEGY WAS THAT HIGHER PRICES
WOULD BOTH REDUCE CONSUMPTION AND PROVIDE AN
INCENTIVE FOR MORE EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION.
THE CONGRESS NAUTRALLY FEAR THE POLITICAL
REPERCUSSIONS AMONG THEIR CONSTITUENTS.

WHILE CONGRESS HAS DILLY-DALLIED, US OIL IMPORTS
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HAVE CONTINUED TO GROW DUE TO FALLING DOMESTIC
PRODUCTION AND RISING CONSUMPTION. THIS HAS
INCREASED THE TRADE DEFICIT AND WEAKENED THE
DOLLAR, THOUGH THE EFFECT HAS BEEN CUSHIONED
BY THE PRICE FREEZE OPERATED BY THE OIL EXPORTERS.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF CONGRESS IS A MAJOR PROBLEM

IN US GOVERNMENT. THERE IS NO PARTY WHIP TO
ENSURE THAT MEMBERS VOTE AS THE HEAD OF
GOVERNMENT REQUIRES. WHETHER OR NOT THE CONGRESS
MAJORITY IS OF THE SAME PARTY AS THE PRESIDENT, IT
TENDS TO GO ITS OWN WAY.

BUT SOME PRESIDENTS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CARRY CONGRESS
WITH THEM. MR. CARTER HAS FAILED, LARGELY BECAUSE
HE DOES NOT TRY HARD ENOUGH. FALLING BACK ON
THE PRESIDENT'S RESIDUAL POWERS, AS HE IS NOW
THREATENING TO DO, IS A SIGN OF POLITICAL WEAKNESS.
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